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**Vincennes.**



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Book V7C3





A BRIEF SKETCH  
OF THE  
Past, Present and Prospects  
OF  
VINCENNES,

BY  
HENRY S. GAUTHORN,

1884.

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VINCENNES, IND.  
A. V. Crotts' Book and Job Printing Rooms.

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# VINCENNES.

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I have gathered and grouped together, some matters connected with Vincennes, which may be worthy of preservation. The material used in the preparation is derived either from personal observation or gleaned from original and authentic sources.

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## LOCATION.

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An accurate geodetic survey of the United States is now being made under the direction of the Federal Government, and Vincennes was selected as one of the stations for observation. The station here is situated near the geographical centre of the city, in the court house yard, off the north east side of the building, and is marked by three stones, set in con-

crete, the centre one nearly flush with the surface and bearing this mark on its face:

Latitude of the station point  $38^{\circ} 40' 37''$ .

Longitude west of Greenwich  $5^h 50'' 08.88$ .

or  $87^{\circ} 31' 28.1''$

These are the field results but not likely to be changed by a tenth of a second of arc by the final calculations.

The City of Vincennes is located on the left bank of the Wabash River, on the western boundary of the State of Indiana, the river only separating it from the State of Illinois. It is distant 192 miles west of Cincinnati, Ohio, 150 miles East of St. Louis, Missouri, 236 miles South of Chicago, 51 miles north of the Ohio River at Evansville, and 117 miles south west of Indianapolis, the capital of Indiana.

The city is located on high ground beyond the possible reach of inundation, and is bounded on the north east and south west by beautiful and fertile prairie lands, and on the south east and north west by a picturesque range of hills, covered with forest trees, and presenting an attractive and pleasing landscape view.

The location is peculiarly fortunate and safe, occupying as it does a level depression, surrounded on all sides by elevated grounds and hills, which protect it from the chilling blasts of winter, or the destructive storms of summer so prevalent and desolating in portions of the West. The surrounding hills operate as a bulwark to divert and elevate the course of passing winds, and thus shield and protect it from their fury, so that during the long period of time the site has been the home of civilization, no occasion for alarm has been furnished, and not the slightest damage has been done to life or



property within its limits, on this account, although it has numbered among its structures steeples and towers insecurely anchored, but which have stood unharmed for years and until finally removed by design.

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## TOPOGRAPHY.

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The topographical and geological site upon which the city stands is remarkable and worthy of attention. The entire area it occupies may be properly called a gravel bank extending from the surface to the water line below. No point has yet been pierced and penetrated where this formation has not been exposed. In 1880 the City authorities excavated on Busseron, between Second and Third streets, for a cistern to the water line below, and gravel and sand alone were found in the progress of the work and at a considerable depth beneath the surface a large isolated lump of coal was found imbedded in gravel both above and below.

The conformation of the surrounding hills indicate that in the past, they were the restraining barriers of volumes of water, either as a flowing stream or confined lake. Everything around here of a natural formation indicates the former presence and active agency of water, which has been expelled from the surface and the site elevated by some mighty upheaval. A similar but gradual and quiet result has been observable in progress since the advent of civilized men. My

grandfather came to this place almost with the present century, and for many years after his coming the village was annually surrounded by water, and the "Creoles" circumnavigated it in their "pirogues" at flood seasons and unloaded their cargoes in the rear of the rise upon which the court house stands.

As late as 1836 the topographical appearance was unique. The river front at Hart street was called the "old stone landing," and from that point abruptly rose and extended along the entire river front to the limits of the city below a gravel hill from 15 to 20 feet in height above the present level of the city streets. It presented an abrupt face to the river but gradually sloped to First street. Between this gravel hill and the elevated ground upon which the court house stands the village was originally located, and almost entirely below what is now Broadway street, and even this space in places was unfit for occupation, owing to the presence of surface water. From a point near the present intersection of Fifth and Perry streets, running diagonally through the town in the direction of the public cemetery, the ground was low and but little better than a pond. And immediately beyond the high ground upon which the court house stands was a pond of water several feet in depth, which was sustained throughout the year.

The first road leading from this place was to Louisville, Kentucky, in the direction of Petersburg, over the "Buffalo trace," so called from the fact that it had been originally traced through the intervening forests by the immense herds of buffalo that periodically migrated back and forth from the blue grass regions of the "dark and bloody ground," passing the Kentucky river at the "Great Crossings" in Scott county,

the Ohio at the falls at Louisville, the Wabash at the ford just below, and thence to the rich prairies of Illinois.

As late as 1845 the road to Louisville passed out of town some distance south east of the present location of Callender's mill, in the direction of Mr. Burnet's residence, and passed over what was then an impassible swamp, the roadway being an artificial construction called "corduroy," and horses and cattle running at large were liable to mire anywhere outside of the roadway itself.

The town centered at first around the present location of the Cathedral. The fort built here by de Vinsenne in 1702 was located on the river bank between the river and the church, according to the uniform custom of the French to have the church and fort contiguous to each other. Around these as a nucleus the town gathered and sprung up. The hotel of Mark Barnett, long the principal one in the town, was situated on the river bank below Barnett street; that of Peter Jones, of a later date, was also on the river bank just below Broadway street, and that of Hyacinthe Lasselle, of a still later date, was on the west corner of Second and Perry streets. The space only between Barnett and Broadway streets and extending but a short distance back from the river, was occupied by the town. On the north east of the town was located the Piankeshaw village and fields.

Of late years a doubt has been expressed as to the location of the fort. But this doubt has been occasioned by persons seeking information on the subject and trusting to the defective memories of persons living, rather than reliable and authentic sources of information. That the church and fort were contiguous to each other is sustained by abundant evidence, and the river front adjacent to the

church was always called by old residents of the town the "block house lot," and was only subdivided into lots as now occupied so late as 1830. And the location of the fort there is consistent with all reliable data, and the happening of known events connected with the two, and there is no evidence that the location of either was ever changed from the original site, but there is abundant evidence that the location of the church has ever been where it is at present.

The building occupied by the Territorial Government and Legislature during the time this was the capital of the Territory, was a frame building of two stories, situated on the south west side of Main street, midway between Second and Third streets. The building still remains in the city in a good state of preservation, although about 30 years ago it was moved from its original location and is now situated on the south east side of upper Third street just below Harrison, and is occupied as a private residence.

The first building used for court purposes was built of logs, and situated on the north corner of Second and Broadway streets. After it was no longer used for court purposes it was converted into a hospital, and while Fort Knox was garrisoned was occupied by sick and disabled soldiers.

The second location used for court purposes was the west corner of Fourth and Buntin streets, now occupied by Judge Niblack as a residence, and the north corner opposite thereto was occupied by the jail and stray pen. This site was acquired from Robert Buntin, but the precise date is not known, as the original deed of purchase was lost and the record of it destroyed with the burning of the records in the Recorder's office, January 21, 1814, and this loss was supplied by a second conveyance executed May 23d, 1823.

The present court house square was acquired by purchase from Dr. Jacob Kuykendall, on the 20th of September, 1830, and has ever since been used for court and other county purposes.

The building occupied by the Bank of Vincennes, subsequently by act of the Territorial Legislature in 1816, adopted as the State Bank of Indiana, and which failed, to the disgrace of the State and the management of the bank, and gave rise to the celebrated "quo warranto" proceedings in the early judicial history of the State, was located in a two-story brick building on the east corner of First and Broadway streets, and the palatial residence of Charles Smith, one of the directors at the time of its failure, was on the north side of the same street, just opposite.

The extensive and substantial buildings of the Steam Mill Company were still standing as late as 1844. They occupied the site of the river side of the park. The mill itself was an immense brick building, painted white, two stories high, and from the second story extended a long carriage way, over 500 feet in length to the river at low water mark, upon which the supplies of logs floated down the river were carried into the mill. The Terre Haute State Road passed beneath this log-way, on the river side of the mill. Immediately above the mill was a large and tall brick malt house which was connected with the mill by a wooden bridge to the second story. And still above was located near where Ebner's ice house now stands a large distillery. Around this mill as late as 1845 there were still standing several large two-story brick residences and business houses, more than in the remainder of the town, and their surroundings indicated that regular streets, and sidewalks paved with brick, had been constructed. These were all substantial brick build-

ings, and finely finished. The Masonic hall had been in one of these buildings, and the walls were beautifully frescoed and embellished with the symbolical emblems of the order.

And so late as 1850 the survey out of which has been carved "Judah's" addition was enclosed with a rail fence and used, as all the prairie above it, for farming purposes. The area back of the court house was all unoccupied, and only used occasionally for horse racing. All that part of the city above Hart street was vacant, the only houses being the "Harrison Mansion" and the residence of Judge Parke, on the river just above Hart street, and the residence of Judge Law, also on the river between the other two. The "Marchal field" extended back in the rear of the Seminary grounds from Sixth street to the city limits, and so late as 1846 was used and cultivated as a corn field until subdivided by Alvin W. Tracy, his executor. In 1857 the Lutheran church, on Eighth street, was the only building of any kind in that quarter of the city.

#### THE "HARRISON MANSION"

Was erected soon after the Governor came, which was in 1800. It is one of the oldest buildings in the city, and is truly an ancient landmark. When occupied by General Harrison it was called "Grouseland," and was situated on what was called in "Old Virginia" parlance "my plantation," and the ground around it was used for agricultural purposes until he laid out his addition to the borough in 1816. It was here the celebrated interview was held between the Governor and Chief Tecumseh. The location of this historic interview is at this day misplaced much in the same way and by similar processes as the fort. My grandfather, Elihu Stout, was with Gen. Harrison as one of his guards, and he always located it from personal knowledge as being on the porch on the south west side of the residence in a grove of locust trees, (which were still standing during the "hard cider" campaign of 1840, and under them was held

the great mass meeting and barbecue during that campaign,) and they remained standing until the property was acquired by Andrew Armstrong, several years later, who cut them down. Gen. Harrison during the entire interview with Tecumseh never left the porch, but remained there with his guard near him.

#### THE SEMINARY BUILDING,

On the square between Fourth and Sixth streets and Perry and Hart streets, was one of the first brick buildings erected in the city limits, having been built soon after the Harrison mansion. It was originally intended for school purposes, and was so used under the auspices of the public until the property was purchased by the Bishop of Vincennes in 1838, when St. Gabriel College was projected and successfully conducted there until 1845, when the building was converted into an asylum for orphan children. It was originally only two stories in height, the third story and the east and west wings having been added since the property passed into the possession of the Bishop of Vincennes.

#### ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL

Is the oldest institution connected with Vincennes. The first building was constructed of logs set up on end and the interstices filled with adobe. It contained pews for the convenience of worshippers, but was without any floor except the earth, and the custom was to bury the dead in the body of the church beneath their pews and frequent mention of such interments appear in the *Western Sun*. \* \* \* The earliest record preserved in the archives of the Church is the marriage of Julien Trattier, of Montreal, Canada, and Jasette Marie, daughter of a Frenchman and an Indian. The entry is dated April 21, 1749, and is signed by Sebastian Louis Meurin, S. J.

The following is a translation of the entry of the first baptism: "June 21, 1749. I baptised John Baptist, son of "Peter Siapichagame and of Catharine Mskieve; Francis "Filatraux was god-father and Mary Mikitchenseive god-mother.

SEBAST. LUD. MEURIN, S. J."

This is only the record as preserved. It begins without

title page or introduction, and bears evidence that something preceding has been lost or destroyed.

Madam Trattier, whose marriage is the first recorded act as preserved, died in December 1750 and was buried in the Church "under her pew on the Gospel side."

Of the thirty one priests who officiated in this Church from the date of the above record in 1749 up to the advent of Bishop Brute, in 1834, only one died here, Rev. John Francis Rivet, who died January 31, 1804. Father Conic was for a time parish priest here, but has not been mentioned by any one, except Bishop Brute, who has ever written on the early history of this church.

It was in this old log church that the conference took place and terms of surrender of Fort Sackville agreed upon between Gov. Hamilton and Gen. Clarke, February 27th, 1779. This original log church fronted the river, and was repaired, enlarged and improved from time to time, until finally it gave place to the present brick church, the erection of which was determined on at a public meeting called for the purpose of devising ways and means to erect it, by Rev. J. L. Champonier and Hyacinthe Lasselle, on July 24th, 1825. The corner stone was laid by the Rev. Champonier during Easter week, on Thursday, March 30, 1826, and the building has been erected, added to and decorated from time to time until it has reached its present finished condition,

Vincennes, as we have already said, has been very fortunate, and its material structures have been exempt in a remarkable degree from injury by fire, flood, or other casualty. Yet while it has been a profitable field for the operation of fire insurance companies as a general thing, the town has sustained on three occasions serious damages by the ravages of fire. On October 16, 1841, a fire destroyed all but two or three buildings on the north east side of Main, between First and Second streets; and on the 6th of December, 1854, all the buildings on the north east side of Main, between Second



and Third, were destroyed by fire; and on Sunday, April 15, 1860, nine business houses, on the South east side of Second, between Main and Busseron streets, were also destroyed by fire.

#### THE HEALTH OF VINCENNES

Has been far above the average of Western towns. Yet in 1820 a contagious fever, akin in its fatality to the yellow fever, almost decimated its population, retarded its advance for years, and cast a gloom over its future. This pestilential visitation was due partly to the number of ponds of stagnant water that then surrounded it, and even occupied a portion of its site, but more especially to the sanitary condition of the river during that year, when it was entirely covered from shore to shore with a rank growth of grass, leaving no channel for the flow of the water, which was consequently stagnated and produced miasma and disease. For years after this growth of grass continued in the river during its whole course, and just opposite the town was the cause of labor, trouble and expense to prevent sickness on account of it. The growth annually continued during the dry season of the year, although gradually diminishing in quantity until as late as 1864, since which time, singularly enough, it has not appeared, and the entire course of the river is now free from this nuisance.

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#### ANTIQUITIES.

Vincennes is rich in material of historic interest. There centre around her memories of the past, extending beyond the recollection of the living, and farther and farther until they gradually fade away and are lost and shrouded in the mists of conjecture.

The date when it was first visited by civilized men cannot be determined with precision. But it was certainly not later than 1680. This is not mere speculation, but can be logically reasoned out as a necessary "sequitur" from the happening of known occurrences. It was of French origin, and owes its early settlement to considerations of military necessity. The cabinet directing the affairs of the French nation were aware as early as 1650 of the dangers that environed and would in the future imperil the integrity of their possessions on this continent, and prudently endeavored to counteract them and thus perpetuate their sway. Their colonies in the north on the St. Lawrence river were separated from those in the south on the Gulf of Mexico, and it was necessary for protection in a military point of view to connect them by a direct line of communication. This could not be done along the Atlantic coast, as the English, their hostile and menacing rivals, occupied the intervening space in that quarter. It was only feasible through the unbroken and unexplored wilderness of the West. And this connection through the wilds of the West was finally determined on by means of a line of forts. But to execute the determination was a work requiring time. A survey had to be made and a practical route adopted. It required years to explore this vast expanse of country through which the proposed connection was to be effected. Exploring parties would have to grope their way through this extended stretch of wilderness, not only presenting natural obstacles, but filled with savage and unfriendly Indian tribes. The entire field, stretching thousands of miles had to be viewed in all its parts in order to ascertain the most feasible and practicable route.

The Mississippi river, flowing directly north and south, was a natural highway, affording easy ingress into the uttermost parts of the north from the Gulf of Mexico. So, too the river St. Lawrence and the great chain of lakes connected with it was a natural highway, opening the heart of the continent to approach from the Atlantic Ocean. The design was to connect the two great natural highways.

The St. Lawrence water route was continuous from the Atlantic Ocean West, almost as far as the headwaters of the Mississippi river, as their sources are only separated by a narrow divide. It is almost a direct line west from the Atlantic seaboard as far as Detroit river. But here its direct western course is interrupted and its continuity sustained only by the long and tedious passage for hundreds of miles north, through the straits of Mackinaw, and then south an equal distance. To avoid this circuitry and waste of time it was determined to commence the projected connection from the Detroit river to the Mississippi at the junction of the Ohio. This route was practicable. It afforded water communication almost the entire distance. The waters of the Maumee, Wabash and Ohio rivers presented natural facilities for travel and transportation, only interrupted by the portage between the waters of the Wabash and Maumee rivers. And this divide, separating the headwaters of these two rivers is so narrow and contracted that the crystal drops falling on the earth from their home in the sky are puzzled to determine which course to take, whether to seek the cold and sparkling shores of the Atlantic through the Maumee or the warm and rosy bosom of the Gulf of Mexico through the Wabash.

It is matter of history furnished by the Quebec annals that the surveys for the route had all been completed and the location of the forts determined on before the advent of 1700. The site of Vincennes was selected as the location of one of these forts, and in all probability the last one between the Lakes and the Mississippi river; for the reason that it was from here the northern forces, operating in concert with those from Louisiana, rendezvoused and started upon the disastrous campaign in 1736 against the Chickasaws.

It was supposed for a long time that the "Ouabache" was the river that emptied into the Mississippi. Father Marest, one of the Jesuit missionaries, in giving an account of his explorations and observations in the West to the Superior of his order, according to the rules and customs of his order, in a letter still preserved and published in a volume

entitled "Lettres edificants et Curienses," written from Kaskaskia, November 12, 1712, says:

"About eight leagues, or 240 miles below this, there empties into the Mississippi another fine river called 'Oua-basche.' It comes from the north east."

Judge Law, in his address on Vincennes, delivered February 22, 1839, says:

"It is a singular fact that the Wabash was known and navigated by the whites long before the Ohio was known to exist."

This fact, however is not singular when the geographical situation of the two rivers is considered. This continent was first colonized by the different nations of Europe along the Atlantic coast. The Alleghany mountains and Blue Ridge range were barriers forbidding the discovery and exploration of the Mississippi valley except by way of the St. Lawrence and its connecting lakes. The country was accordingly first visited and explored from the Lake region, and the headwaters of the Wabash, being geographically nearer to that region, according to the natural order of events was necessarily first discovered.

The first of the forts built by the French was near the site of the city of Detroit in 1701. The following year three others were built. The first one was on the Maumee where Fort Wayne now stands, and on the spot where Mass was first celebrated by a Jesuit missionary. The outlines of this fort remained and were seen by Gen. Wayne in 1794. The second was built on the Wabash river below Lafayette, on the Wea plains and was called "Ountanon," which was destroyed by the Indians in 1765. The third was built at this place. These three forts were probably built by the same man, de Vinsenne, an officer in the French service, and were probably constructed in the order named, as that is natural and reasonable considering the point where the forces employed in building them started to do the work, which was from the lakes.

It must have been late in the fall of 1702 when the forces arrived in this place. It was the invariable custom of the

French in all their explorations and conquests on this continent to operate with two forces, the sword and the cross: the one representing the civil and the other the spiritual power. And accordingly the forces that came here to build the fort, and thus lay the corner stone for civilized existence in these parts, were accompanied by a French Jesuit Missionary who, in the fall of the year 1702, celebrated Mass at this place before thousands of astonished savages. The first Mass was said near where the Cathedral now stands, and the fort was built on the spot, as the fort and the church, according to French custom, were concomitants of each other. This holy act of the unknown Jesuit father may be taken as the date when the site of this city was first consecrated and dedicated to civilization and Christianity. This occurrence is recorded in the Quebec annals, and its authenticity is beyond question as any event of the past the knowledge of which we derive from history.

De Vinsenne came and erected the fort in 1702, but did not remain here at that time. He returned to the lake region and was entrusted with the command of an expedition against the Indians in the vicinity of Detroit in 1704. He subsequently returned here and remained in the command of the fort here until 1736. He probably returned here soon after the campaign of 1704 just referred to, as there is no farther mention of him in the Canadian records; and from all the accounts we have of him he was a remarkable man, and a favorite and trusted officer in the French service; and it is reasonable to conclude he continued in the service without interruption. That he returned here after building the fort and his northern campaign in 1704 there is abundant evidence to be found remaining in the official records at Kaskaskia. He married in 1733 the daughter of Philip Longpee, of that place. His father-in-law died in Kaskaskia in 1734, and an inventory was taken of his estate in September of the same year, which shows that de Vinsenne was then at the Fort here. There are also numerous documents preserved in the recorder's office at Kaskaskia signed by him thus:

"Francois Morgan. de Vinsenne commandant of the troops of the King in the fort upon Ouabasche."

There is also found there record evidence of the ratification of a sale by his wife in 1734, signed by her, "Madame de Vinsenne," which shows that she was then a resident of this place.

In 1736 the French were at war with the Chickasaws, who inhabited the country on the Mississippi river midway between here and the Gulf of Mexico. It was determined to attack them from the north and south at the same time. The northern forces were under the general command of M. D'Artagnette, and they organized here for the campaign. De Vinsenne accompanied and operated under him with the troops of the fort here. He was accompanied on that expedition by Father Senat, a Jesuit missionary, and who in 1736 was pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church at this place. Father Senat went as the spiritual adviser of the troops. This campaign was disastrous. The commander, M. D'Artagnette, de Vinsenne and Father Senat all lost their lives. Charlevoix, in giving an account of this disaster, records the barbarous manner in which the wounded and the prisoners were tortured and burned by the Indians; and makes honorable mention of the heroism of Father Senat and de Vinsenne, who scorned any attempt to save their lives by flight, but remained with the certainty of meeting death in the most cruel and shocking manner at the hands of the infuriated and victorious Indians rather than leave their wounded companions. The retreat of the troops was conducted by a young officer, M. de Voisin, only 16 years of age, who succeeded in conducting them back to the fort here. Up to this time (1736,) this place had received many different appellations, but not the one it was destined to bear. It had been called "Au Poste," "The Post," "Post Ouabache," "Post St. Francis Xavier," after the church which has always been so styled. But after that disaster, and the heroic and noble conduct of de Vinsenne and the recital of them by those who escaped and returned to the fort, it was given to it in order to perpetuate his memory. In this connection Bishop Brute says:

"I find no deliberation, no special act, no express monu-

ment for the attaching of his name to the place, but we see how effectually honorable gratitude has given it his name."

This place remained in possession of the French until it fell into the hands of the British at the close of the French war in 1760. It remained in the hands of the British until the spring of 1778, when Father Pierre Gibault, Vicar General of the Bishop of Quebec, who was long the pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church here, administered to the inhabitants the oath of allegiance to the commonwealth of Virginia. This oath was administered to them in the old log Church of St. Francis Xavier, and then and there by this act Father Gibault incorporated this place as part and parcel of the American Colonies, which were struggling to maintain the Declaration of Independence. In December following the administration of this oath by Father Gibault the place was recaptured by the English with forces under the command of Gov. Henry Hamilton, of Detroit. But it was again captured in February, 1779, by the Virginia troops, under Gen. George Rogers Clarke, and has ever since been part of the "land of the free and home of the brave."

The important eras in the history of Vincennes that particularly deserve to be specially remembered are these:

1. The saying of the first Mass by the unknown Jesuit Father and the building of the fort in 1702;

2. The death of de Vinsenne and the name of the place in honor and memory of him in 1736;

3. The first oath of allegiance to the American cause administered by Father Gibault in St. Francis Xavier Church in 1778;

4. The final capture by Gen. Clark, and, we hope, its perpetual dedication to freedom in 1779.

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## SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

As we have already stated, Vincennes was originally settled by the French. They came here from Arcadia, or New France, as the Canadas were formerly called, whilst they

were under the jurisdiction of France. In manners, habits and customs they were similar to the French people everywhere—vivacious, good natured, fond of pleasure, and leisure too. After they came here they intermarried with the Indian tribes who inhabited the country on both sides of the Wabash, the Mascoutens, the Piankeshaws and the Miamis, and from this intermixture of races sprung the “Creole” French that for years was the dominant race in both the town and country around here. This mixed stock embodied in combination the qualities of the two roots or sources of derivation. From the French, vivacity and good nature, and from the Indian, wild, roving and irascible traits of character. The result was that the Creole population was of a rather wild and intractable disposition, and mingled with it a love of ease and pleasure. Labor was distasteful, and was only performed as a matter of necessity, and not from any desire to accumulate worldly goods and possessions. Hunting, fishing, dancing and all manner of sports and amusements were cultivated and practiced. The same social status was observable here as to-day exists in the French Arcadian settlement of Louisiana back from the Mississippi river. The dance was a favorite pastime, and the sound of the fiddle and the tread of feet to its strains were more frequent than that of the loom and the anvil. Chicken fighting and horse racing were also favorite diversions, and all manner of means were resorted to by the Creoles to pass away the time and enjoy life. Fighting was also common, but in good old-fashioned style, and only tolerated with such weapons as God and nature furnished. Up to 1846 the electors were not restricted to the townships, but could exercise the right anywhere in the county. The great volume of the vote was cast at this place, being the county seat. Election day was great day for the people and they flocked to the county seat to exercise the freeman’s right of voting and to see the “sights” usual on such occasions. It was the time set apart by custom to settle



disputes by trial by battle and many were settled that way. Within my own recollection on election day as many as a dozen fights would take place, one after the other, and when one of the combatants would say "hold enough," hostilities would instantly cease and the difficulty was settled and at rest. The main battle ground was the intersection of Main and Third streets, and thousands there assembled to witness the pugilistic exercises, and elevated places of observation were at a premium.

The only vehicles to be seen on the streets of the old borough as late as 1840, were French carts called "Calesche." One of them would be a curiosity now. They were two-wheeled, of domestic manufacture, and constructed entirely of wood, without the use of metal of any kind. They were used for hauling wood, produce, and every kind of service, and were the only carriages for the use of the family, either male or female, and in these carts, the body of which was in size and shape very similar to a large sized dry goods box, an entire Creole family, man, wife and children, would huddle together and jostle along, the horse maintaining a brisk trot, and the heads of the entire household bobbing up and down at a lively rate. These Creole customs and practices were legitimate fruits of the blending of the two races. They were professed Catholics in religion, but paid little heed to the precepts of the church. When Father Flaget, afterwards first Bishop of Bardstown, Ky., came here as resident pastor in December 21, 1792, he tried to curb the people and reform their habits and enforce conformity to church discipline. He preached to them, and in his sermons condemned balls, dancing, and all frivolous amusements then practiced, as being contrary to the teachings of the church. He encouraged agriculture and the mechanic arts, and started a school to teach the youth the different trades. He was recalled, however, before he succeeded in perfecting a permanent reformation.

As I have before stated, for a long time the Creole population was the controlling and dominant race element here. It was sufficient in numbers and did control all elections. So late as 1840, during the "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" campaign, the French vote here was all powerful. And even in 1854 and 1855, when the Know Nothing party came, like a black knight was its visor down, the voting strength of the "Creole" population was upwards of 500 votes. But the days of the "Creole" race are about numbered. It is perceptibly dying out and disappearing. And this is not a result of emigration, as it is a true saying that the "Creoles" never wandered far from the homes of their sires, but is due to the wasting and fading away of the stock. How many French families, whose members were formerly almost as numerous as the leaves on the trees, are represented now by no living ones? Where are the Busserons, the Lasselles, the Genereux, the Andres, the Cardinals, the Bazadones, the Burdalows and the Richardvilles? They have almost entirely disappeared. This result is in part attributable to the frequent intermarriage of blood relations and the consequent impoverishment of the stock, and in part also to its having come in contact with the Anglo-Saxon, that strong and aggressive blood race, that absorbs, eliminates and appropriates all that comes in its way. But many of the "Creole" French yet remain with us, and we hope may long continue, as there is melody and richness in the names of the "Creole" French.

It was the practice until a very recent period for all candidates for office to form a "caravan," as it was called, and perambulate through the county together. It was not customary, in the early history of elections here, to make party nominations, and machine politics was unknown, and the field was open to all and every one could enter at will and the "longest pole knocked the persimmon," with better results for the public service than under the manipulation of bosses and party fealty.

The population that came here after 1779, when the ter-

ritory was acquired by Virginia, was principally from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina, all slave holding States. They brought their slaves with them and slaves were held here in considerable numbers at the time the ordinance of 1787 went into operation. Of course the ordinance put an end to the tenure of slave property *de jure* but not *de facto*. Its force was evaded by sundry devices, and a plan of "apprenticing" was sanctioned and practiced, to disguise the holding of slave property under that name. In 1806, after the organization of the Territorial Government, the pro-slavery feelings of the people were so strong that they attempted to have Congress suspend the operation of that ordinance as to slavery upon the plea of State necessity, and its accomplishment was only prevented by the firmness of President Jefferson, who never was the friend and advocate of the extension or existence of slavery, but who said the mention of it "filled him with alarm like a fire bell in the night," and that on account of it "he trembled for his country when he reflected that God was just." But although the law forbid the holding of slaves they were still held notwithstanding. So late as 1830 the Trustees of the borough of Vincennes caused the Marshal of the borough to take a census of its population. He did so, and his official return to the Trustees shows the following:

White males.....	763
White females.....	639
Free black males.....	63
Free black females.....	63
Slave males.....	12
Slave females.....	20

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Total..... 1,560

And this, notwithstanding the ordinance of 1787 had been all the time in force until the State Constitution was adopted, which also prohibited slavery in positive terms, and notwithstanding the decision of the Supreme Court of the State in the *Lasselle* case, delivered in 1820, which declared all such tenure

without warrant of law. I find in the files of "The Western Sun from 1808 to 1820, frequent advertisements offering rewards of \$50 and \$100 for the return of runaway slaves.

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## DISTINGUISHED PERSONNEL.

Vincennes has been in the past a common centre in which congregated an array of able, determined and energetic men. The most of these became permanent residents. But many after a short sojourn here went elsewhere in every direction, to lay the foundation of society in other places, and to frame constitutions and laws for the well being of generations of civilized people, and to exercise power and authority over countries of vast extent,

It is impossible in any proper compass to enumerate all of these. I will name only chosen examples, illustrative of the quality of men who laid the foundation of our social structure.

I name first the unknown Jesuit missionary who in the fall of 1702 celebrated Mass on or near the present site of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, before thousands of assembled and astonished savages and the troops of the French government who came here from Canada to build a fort, and who thus cast the shadow of the cross for the first time over this spot and laid the corner stone of Christian civilization in these parts. His name is not recorded in the pages of human story, but his act will be remembered and appreciated as long as history is faithful to her trust.

I shall next name that illustrious man in whose honor Vincennes was named, who first came here with the above named Jesuit Father in 1702, who was styled by Rt. Rev. Bishop Brute thus: "Francois Morgan, de Vinsenne," but whose correct appellation, I am inclined to believe from information furnished me by Edmond Mallet, of the Carroll Institute, Washington City, was this: "Jean Baptiste Bissot. Sieur de Vinsenne." Rt. Rev. Bishop de la Hailandiere, on what authority I do not know, said he was of Irish descent.

But we think there is no room for a reasonable doubt that he was a Canadian by birth and of French origin. He was in all probability the son of Francis Bissot, a native of Normandy in France, who emigrated to Arcadia or New France and there married Marie Couillard, a native of Quebec, and de Vinsenne was a son of this marriage. He was baptised at Quebec January 21, 1668. Louis Jolliet, the explorer of the Mississippi river, married an elder sister of de Vinsenne in 1675, and it is probable that his first experience in exploring the wilderness of the West in company of that distinguished man in his western travels.

De Vinsenne was a distinguished officer of the royal troops in Canada. He first came here in 1702 and built the fort and returned to Canada where he was in active service as a military officer in the field. The last mention of him in the Canadian records is by Potherie, who refers to him as having been sent to command the fort among the Miamis. This reference by Potherie was written in 1722, but how long before he was sent is not stated. The fort among the Miamis was the fort at this place. When he came to command the fort he remained here permanently, as there is no evidence of his ever being recalled or having left. He commanded the troops from the fort here in the unfortunate expedition against the Chickasaw Indians in 1736, and lost his life in a battle. After his death, for his bravery and heroic conduct, this place was named in his honor. He left a daughter, Mary Theresa, who married Louis De Lisle, from whom the De Lisle' of our county are doubtless descended.

I name Father Mermet, a Jesuit missionary who was the first resident pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church at this place. Father Marest, in his letter from Kaskaskia, dated November 9, 1712, says that he had been sent here, but how long before the date of the letter is not stated. He died at Kaskaskia in 1736.

I name Father Senat, the resident pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church at this place in 1736 at the time the expedi-

tion against the Chickasaw Indians started from here. He accompanied the troops from the fort here on that expedition as their spiritual adviser. When defeat came and retreat was determined on, the soldiers begged him to return with them. But he refused, like a true soldier of the cross, and remained to administer the consolations of religion to the wounded and dying soldiers. Of course he was captured by the savages, and was first inhumanly tortured and then burnt at the stake.

I name Very Rev. Pierre Gibault. He was the son of Pierre Gibault and Marie St. Jean, respectable Canadians, of French origin, and was born in Montreal, Canada, April 7, 1737. He was ordained priest on the 19th of March, 1768, and shortly afterwards was sent to the Illinois country as Vicar General of the Bishop of Quebec. On his way to his missionary field he baptised a child of John Baptiste Cadot at Michillemacinae, on the 23d of July, 1768, in the certificate to which he styled himself "Vicar General of Louisiana." But after his arrival in the Illinois country he styled himself "Vicaire Generale des Illinois et Tamarois." He first arrived here in 1770, but only remained at that time two months. He afterwards returned and was the resident pastor of the church here until 1789. In the spring of 1778 he espoused the cause of the American Colonies, then struggling with the British power for independence, and by his influence over the people he gained them all over to the American cause, and publicly administered to them in the church the oath of allegiance to the American cause in February, 1778. This was a year prior to Gen. Clarke's capture of the place, and Father Gibault has the honor of having first secured the good will and transferred the allegiance of the people to the American cause. He rendered Gen. Clarke invaluable service when he came the following year. He petitioned the Government for a small donation of land and Gov. St. Clair in his report forwarding it to the Department says "that he was very useful to Gen. Clarke upon many occasions and has suffered very

heavy losses." His moderate request however was never granted, and he died very poor at Kaskaskia or St. Genevieve or Cahokia.

I name Gen. George Rogers Clarke, a native of Virginia, who was entrusted by Patrick Henry in 1777, then Governor of Virginia, with the command of an expedition against Kaskaskia. He captured that place and Cahokia in 1778, and then directed his efforts against the British in possession of this place under Gov. Hamilton. And after a difficult and dangerous march in the winter, wading the swollen streams that lay in his way, he finally arrived here and captured the place February 27th, 1779, and the North West territory was then wrested from British rule and dedicated to freedom, and has so remained to the present time. The conference to arrange the terms of surrender between Gen. Clarke and Gov. Hamilton was held in St. Francis Xavier Church, near the fort, while Father Gibault was pastor. Gen. Clarke and his troops, for their services in capturing the fort, were afterwards rewarded by extensive grants of land. Gen. Clarke died at his residence called "Locust Grove," near the city of Louisville, Kentucky, on the 13th of February, 1818, and was there buried with imposing ceremonies and the honors of war.

I name Colonel Francis Vigo, a native of Mondovi, in the Kingdom of Sardinia, where he was born in the year 1747. He left his native country at an early age and went to Spain, where he enlisted as a Spanish soldier. He was sent on duty as a soldier to New Orleans, where he soon left the military service and became an Indian trader and rapidly accumulated means. He left New Orleans and went to St. Louis the better to carry on his traffic with the Indians. He ardently espoused the American cause, and was one of the principal men on the Mississippi river, in the neighborhood of St. Louis, at the time of Gen. Clarke's expedition against Kaskaskia, and after his capture of that place it was Col. Vigo who suggested and urged the subsequent expedition of Clarke

against this place, which was no part of the duty assigned him in the commission of Gov. Henry. Col. Vigo furnished his private means to Gen. Clarke to fit out the expedition and aid in making the capture. Without his aid and means it would not have been undertaken or carried out to a successful result. Henry Clay, when he visited this place in 1817, was tendered a public reception, and in the course of a speech he then delivered alluded to Col. Vigo and the invaluable services he had rendered Gen. Clarke and the entire country. He petitioned Congress simply for reimbursement for his outlays, but his petition was never granted. The year before his death he was sick at Baptiste LaPlante's, and Bishop Brute called to see him, and in the course of conversation Col. Vigo referred to his pending claim before Congress, and told the Bishop when paid the Church should have it, and that it would be paid if there was justice on earth. He was for many years a practical Catholic, and one of the trustees of the Church here from 1810 to 1821. He died very poor, March 22, 1836, without the consolations and comforts of his religion, and was buried in the public cemetery with the honors of war.

I name General W. Johnston, a native of Culpepper county, Virginia, who came to this place and located in the year 1793, and remained here continuously in the active practice of the law until his death, which occurred October 26, 1833. He was one of the most prominent members of the bar during his day, was called by his fellow citizens to fill many offices of trust and profit under the Territorial Government and the Borough of Vincennes, was President Judge of the Circuit Court, was frequently a member of the Legislature from this county, and who made the first compilation of the laws of the Territory.

I name Gen. Hyacinthe Lasselle, of French ancestry, who first came to the Wabash country in 1797, and in the year 1804 settled in this place and remained here until he



removed to Logansport, Ind., in the year 1833. When Capt. Taylor was promoted Colonel for his gallant defense of Fort Harrison in 1813, Gen. Lasselle succeeded him in command of that fort. He was during his long residence here one of the prominent citizens of the place, and kept the principal hotel in the town on the west corner of Second and Perry streets, in a large frame building which was destroyed by fire in 1871. He died at Logansport, Indiana, on the 23d of January, 1843.

I name General William Henry Harrison, who was born at Berkeley, Virginia, a descendant of Revolutionary ancestry and the son of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He came here with the advent of the century and the Territorial government of Indiana as the First Territorial Governor, and resided here with his family in his mansion on his plantation adjoining the town, called "Grouseland," from 1800 to 1812. He was the patron of learning and genius, and was the founder of the Vincennes library and University, the hero of the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, and was elected in 1840 the ninth President of the United States and died the incumbent of that office April 4, 1841, and was buried and now rests on the banks of the Ohio at North Bend, a few miles below Cincinnati.

I name Gen. John Gibson, who was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in May, 1740, the first Secretary of the Indiana Territory, who came here with Gen. Harrison in 1800, and remained here until April, 1813, when, as acting Governor of the Territory, he removed with the Territorial Government to Corydon. Gen. Gibson was in every sense of the word an honest man. During his long official life he was always above suspicion, and left behind him the record of a life without spot or blemish. He had seen much service in the Indian wars. He was the interpreter to whom Logan, the Mingo chief, delivered the speech which has been immortalized by Jefferson in his

notes on Virginia. He died at "Braddock's Fields," near Pittsburgh, Penn., at the residence of George Wallace, his son-in-law, on April 19, 1822, in the 82d year of his age.

I name Gen. Zachary Taylor, a Virginian by birth and education who came here a stranger, both to fortune and fame as a United States officer in command of the troops at Fort Knox, who began his career here and gained his first military distinction by his gallant defence of Fort Harrison in 1813, who resided here with his family, where some of his children were born, and who finally reached the highest dignity on earth as the twelfth President of the United States, and died during his term, July 4, 1850.

I have specially named the foregoing as marked and distinguished characters in the history of Vincennes. I also deem it proper to briefly refer to others as deserving of particular mention in the same connection.

DR. JACOB KUYKENDALL,

Who was born in Hampshire county, in the State of Virginia, in the year 1770, and who was there educated and prepared for the practice of medicine, and removed to this place and permanently located in the year 1799, and continued in the active practice of his profession until his death. The present court house square was acquired by the county by purchase from him September 20, 1830. He died Sept. 5, 1823.

ELIHU STOUT,

Who was a native of the State of New Jersey, and at an early age came West and first located at Lexington, Kentucky, but who came to this place almost with the organization of the Territorial Government, who brought with him a handsome patrimony, afterwards doubled in amount by the dowry of his wife; who founded the "Western Sun" newspaper July 4, 1804, the pioneer newspaper within the territory now embraced by the State of Indiana, continued its publication under difficulties until November, 1845, for many years from

the first publication, transporting his material on pack horses from Louisville, Kentucky over the old "Buffalo Trace," and received for his labors a compensation for it per annum less than the present monthly receipts of the same establishment; who died here in April, 1860, and was laid to rest in the public cemetery, leaving behind no evidence of any necessity of taking an inventory of his estate.

THOMAS RANDOLPH.

A native of the State of Virginia, a blood relative of the celebrated John Randolph, of Roanoke, and by affinity with the author of the Declaration of Independence. He was both a scholar and an orator, and came here soon after the organization of the Territorial Government in quest of fame and fortune with many other aspiring and adventurous young men. He was a candidate for delegate to Congress in 1809, and was defeated by Jonathan Jennings by a majority of 43 votes, a result brought about on account of his coming from a slave State, and being a particular friend of Gen Harrison, who was suspicioned to have pro-slavery feelings. The charge that Mr. Randolph was friendly to the institution of slavery and in favor of suspending the operation of the ordinance of 1787 prohibiting it, was denied by him in his public speeches and printed declarations while he was a candidate. And after his defeat he publicly declared it had been brought about by this false and slanderous charge, and induced him to call upon some of the reputed authors of it to meet him upon the field of honor, which was, however, declined. But the bare suspicion created in the minds of the electors by the charge caused his defeat. This result may be considered cumulative evidence of the repugnance with which slavery has been regarded by disinterested men.

DR. ELIAS McNAMEE,

Who was born in Fayette county, Pennsylvania, in 1774, and who came here soon after the organization of the Territorial Government and located permanently. He was an educated

man and a skillful physician and surgeon, and for near 40 years was at the head of his profession in this place. He took an active part in political matters and was a decided opponent of slavery, and he did as much perhaps as any single individual except President Jefferson to prevent the suspension of the ordinance of 1787 prohibiting it in the Territory, and whose only reward for his efforts in this behalf was to be publicly posted as a coward and poltroon because he had the moral courage to do that which the great Hamilton had not to do, and this was allowed without rebuke. He died very suddenly, August 25, 1834.

JOHN BADOLLET,

A native of Switzerland, the friend and companion of Albert Gallatin, through whose influence he received the appointment of Register of the land office here, and who came as such officer with the organization of the Territory and held it continuously until compelled by ill health to resign it in 1836. He discharged the complex duties of that important office with such precision and correctness that no errors were ever found in his work. He was a member of the convention that framed the first Constitution of Indiana. He lived without an enemy, and died regretted on July 29, 1837.

NATHAN EWING,

Who was the first Receiver of Public Monies at this place, and came here at the beginning of the century and remained here until his death. He was an active and energetic man, and was a prominent actor in all enterprises originated and designed to promote the prosperity of the town, both mercantile, manufacturing, commercial and educational. He was removed from office on account of rumors of malfeasance, but of which there was no evidence, the rumors originating with those who, to advance their own, would tarnish and blast the reputation of their neighbor. He died and was buried here.

BENJAMIN PARKE,

Who was born in the State of New Jersey, September 2d, 1777 and came here in 1801. He filled many offices under the Territorial Government, was a Delegate in Congress for the Territory and was appointed Judge of the United States Court for the District of Indiana. In order to be able to bet-

ter discharge the duties of that office he removed to Salem, Indiana, where he resided until his death, August 12, 1835.

LIEUT. THOMAS H. RICHARDSON,

Of the United States army, a chivalrous and gallant young officer, who was here in command of the troops at Fort Knox, and while in such command was killed in a duel with Irvin Wallace, on the 14th of October, 1813, which was fought on the Illinois side of the Wabash river about half a mile below the town.

ISAAC BLACKFORD,

Who came here during territorial days and began the practice of law, and who was appointed one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Indiana, to fill a vacancy created by the death of John Johnson, Sept. 10, 1817, and who remained on the bench of the Supreme Court continuously until January 3d, 1853. He was afterwards appointed a member of the United States Court of Claims. Judge Blackford was a student and a sound lawyer but could lay no claim to eloquence, and was not highly esteemed as an advocate. His memory will be perpetuated in Indiana through the admirable decisions he delivered while on the Supreme bench, and eight volumes of its reports which he prepared and published.

JOHN LAW,

A native of New London, in the State of Connecticut, where he was born October 2d, 1796. He came and located here in 1817, and commenced the practice of the law. He was young and unmarried when he came, and married Sarah Ewing, a daughter of Nathaniel Ewing. His talents and eloquence gave him prominence from the start, and he rose rapidly at the bar and in public estimation, and for more than a quarter of a century he was a central figure and factor in all enterprises and projects calculated to advance Vincennes; he was a favorite citizen, and on the 22d of February, 1839, delivered an address on the early settlement of the town before the Vincennes Historical and Antiquarian Society, which is yet remembered and spoken of with pride and pleasure by the people. He held and honorably filled many public offices of trust. He was Prosecuting Attorney, Judge of the Circuit Court for two terms, Receiver of Public Monies, Commissioner to adjust land titles in the Vincennes Land District,

and twice a member of Congress from this district. He was for many years prominently named as a candidate for United States Senator. Before his death he removed to Evansville, Ind., where he died October 17th, 1873, but his remains according to his request when living were brought here for interment and now mingle with the dust of the town and among the people he served and loved so well.

MOSES TABBS,

A scholar, a Christian, and an orator, who was a native of the State of Maryland, married into the family of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who came here soon after the organization of the State, and located for the practice of law. His probity, gentility and uprightness caused him to rise rapidly in public estimation and enabled him very soon to occupy the front rank at the bar. He was a favorite of the people at the time, and a brilliant and splendid future was before him, but his career here was cut short and abruptly terminated by the unfounded and insane utterances of the wife of the Librarian of the Vincennes Library, that he had addressed to her amatory letters, delivered through the books returned by him to the library, but which reports found no lodgment in the public mind, but were properly placed to the credit of a diseased and disordered mind, but which, however, were sufficient to operate on a noble and sensitive man, as to induce him to terminate his career in and connection with the place forever.

DAVID HART

Was a native of the State of North Carolina. He graduated at the University of that State, and studied law and began the practice at Henderson, in his native State. He soon determined to seek fame and fortune in the young and growing West. He came to Indiana, in 1816, and first located at Princeton. He was soon after elected President Judge of the first Circuit Court, and remained on the bench for three years, when he resigned to commence practice at the bar. He removed to this place in 1820, and was at once recognized as the ablest member among the many distinguished and able jurists who then were members of the Vincennes bar. A bright future of honor and usefulness was before him, but the hopes of his friends were not realized, owing to his death,

after a long and painful illness, Dec. 18, 1822. Judge Har- was a very exemplary man, and was sincerely mourned by his brethren of the bar and the people generally. Judge Law delivered a fine eulogy at his obsequies.

JACOB CALL,

A learned man and a just judge, who presided in the Circuit Court of this Circuit, as President Judge for several years, with ability and general satisfaction. He was elected in November, 1824, to Congress over Thomas H. Blake, to fill a vacancy created by the death of William Prince. He never married but was engaged to Ellen Agan, an accomplished lady of Kentucky. He went to Louisville prior to his nuptials, and his many friends here were startled by the announcement that he was found dead in his room at the Lunatic Asylum, at Frankfort, Kentucky, on April 20, 1826. He committed suicide by hanging with a silk handkerchief. Thus the Judge who presided at the trial, and whose melancholy duty it was to pronounce sentence of death upon the only two persons who have been executed in accordance with a judicial sentence, finally met death in the same way. He must have lost his reason after leaving here for Kentucky, as the news of his death was the first intimation to his friends that anything was wrong with him. He was at the time of his death practicing law with Samuel Judah.

WALLER TAYLOR,

A native of Lunenburg county, Virginia, who came here soon after the organization of the Territory and located for the practice of law. He possessed a strong mind, had the advantage of a classical and legal education, and was appreciated by the people and rose rapidly to distinction in his profession, and places of trust and profit. He was one of the Judges of the General Court, and upon the admission of Indiana into the Union as a State was elected as one of the Senators to represent her in the Senate of the United States. He took his seat in that body on the 12th of December, 1816, and drew the short term, his colleague, James Noble, drawing the long term. His term expired March 3d, 1819. He died at his mother's residence in Lunenburg county, Virginia, August 26, 1826.

## JOHN EWING,

That versatile, eccentric and irascible genius who claimed during life to have been born beneath the "stars and stripes" in a ship on the ocean, but after his death his naturalization papers, granted by the Marine Court of Baltimore, were discovered, and fixed his nationality on the "green isle of the ocean." He came here a merchant prince, and died after a long residence a pensioner on charity. He was a popular favorite, and held many offices of trust. He was a member many times of the House and Senate from this county in the State Legislature. Held many offices under the borough and city governments of this place, and was twice elected a member of Congress from this district. He possessed a diamond mind, which was polished and shone all the brighter from the friction of adversity. He never married, and had no relatives here. He died on April 6th, 1858, and was buried in the public cemetery on a lot by himself, and thus sleeps his last sleep as solitary as he had lived.

## EDWARD A. HANNEGAN,

Who first located here when he came to the State, and for many years practiced law at the bar of this county. He married here and laid the foundation of his subsequent brilliant career in this place. He was one of the most gifted and eloquent men Indiana has ever sent to the National Council. He represented his district with marked ability for one term in the House of Representatives, and served one term in the United States Senate. At the Baltimore convention of 1844 he was the favorite orator among all the distinguished men there present from all parts of the Union. After a varied and brilliant career he died in St. Louis broken-hearted occasioned by the homicide of his brother-in-law at his hands, brought about by an insane impulse, the result of dissipation.

## JONATHAN DOTY,

A native of Somerville in the State of New Jersey, and a graduate of Princeton College. He was a man of amiable manners, and was a favorite with the people and the members of the bar, of which he was a prominent member. His integ-



rity and legal acquirements secured him universal esteem. He died while still a young man on the 22d of February, 1822, and at the time of his death was President Judge of the Circuit Court.

JOHN D. WOOLVERTON,

A native of the State of New York, who was an eminent physician and surgeon, an agreeable and sociable man, whose house was the central point of attraction of society in his day. He was Receiver of Public Monies here, and as such official was the intended victim of the author of the "Cottrel letters," but which effusions, boomerang like, recoiled and spent the force of their destructive qualities upon the suspected author, and only served to polish the reputation and name of the intended victim. He died Saturday, November 1, 1834.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES HARRISON,

A son of Gen. Harrison, and the second Receiver of Public Monies at this place. He held many offices of trust under the borough organization, and took a deep interest in all social and literary matters, and was the charm of the social circle during his residence here. Upon the occasion of his leaving the place a public reception was tendered him by the citizens, at which he delivered a farewell in which he said: "I had fondly hoped to spend my life here, but find I cannot, but I can never forget the place or the friends I leave behind me." He died at his father's house, at North Bend, on Saturday, October 30, 1830, of typhoid fever, in the 32d years of his age. We extract from the notice of his death in the "Western Sun" as follows:

"No circumstances could have produced a greater panic upon the citizens of our borough than the melancholy intelligence. Known to us as he was from the playful morn of infancy, through the budding hopes of manhood, to the ripen years of man. To say that his grandfather, Benjamin Harrison, signed the Declaration of Independence—that his father was the beloved General of our citizens when soldiers in war, or that the dearest pledge he had in life was the only child of the brave Pike—were nothing. His was no borrowed lustre; himself stood forth the possessor of every qualification which makes the truly good citizen."

## SAMUEL JUDAH

Was born in the city of New York in the year 1798. He came to the State of Indiana in the year 1818, at first located at Merom, in Sullivan county, but soon after removed to this place, where he located and remained in the practice of the law until his death. He was married at Corydon, Indiana, to Harriet Brandon, a daughter of Samuel Brandon, one of the first printers to the Territory and State, by Rev. Mr. Williamson, on June 22, 1825. He was justly regarded as one of the most eminent jurists in the West. He was engaged in some way in almost every important case that originated here. He was the chief counsel for the Vincennes University in the long judicial struggle between the State and the University, involving the title to the township of land in Gibson county granted by the General Government for the use of a University, and after many conflicting decisions in the case between the Circuit Court and the Supreme Court of this State and the Supreme Court of the United States, he finally triumphed, and secured for the University here the endowment fund now enjoyed by it. He was also engaged in many important suits in other States, and was associated with Henry clay and other distinguished lawyers in the prosecution and defence of important causes. He was United States District Attorney for Indiana, and several times represented this county in the State Legislature, and was Speaker of the House. He died in this place April 24, 1869.

## RT. REV. SIMON WILLIAM GABRIEL BRUTE DE REMUR,

The first Bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes. He was born in the city of Rennes, France, March 20, 1779, of noble parentage. He was educated in the best institutions of France, and a glorious field was open to him, in his native country. But he turned from it and decided to enter the ministry and devote himself to missionary work in this country. He arrived at Baltimore with Bishop Flaget August 10, 1809, and was first employed in teaching in Mount St. Marys' College, Emmittsburg, Md. He was taken from his duties at that College and appointed the first Bishop of the newly created diocese of Vincennes. He was consecrated such Bishop

by Bishop Flaget, in St. Louis, and in company of Bishops Flaget and Purcell arrived at this place November 5, 1834, and the same day was duly installed as Bishop. He was a very learned man and a hard student. He survived his appointment as Bishop but a few years, but lived long enough to do much good, and laid a solid and enduring foundation upon which his successors have builded. He did much in the way of investigating and making known the early history of this historic place and other places in the West. He died June 26, 1839, and his remains now lie in a vault behind the altar in the chapel under the Cathedral alongside of all the dead Bishops of the diocese. I extract from the "Western Sun" of June 29, 1839, the following notice of his death: "The news of his death produced a general and unanimous expression of grief among our citizens. He was to all a pattern of goodness, morality and pure piety. \* \* \*

"During the short time that he was the head of the Catholic Church in this Diocese, much has been done for the Christian religion. \* \* \* His charity to the poor was almost unbounded, and he denied himself the comforts of life for the purpose of assisting the poor. Besides the individual charities which he bestowed, he established at this place, at his own expense, a free school for indigent male children, and also one for female children."

REV. SAMUEL T. SCOTT,

The pastor of the Presbyterian Church of this place for many years, who died December 20, 1827. He was a general favorite among all classes of citizens, and his memory is still fresh in the recollection of those living who knew him. I extract from his funeral notice in the "Western Sun," January 12, 1827: "In the death of this worthy and pious man, society is bereaved of one of its most useful and amiable members. The general gloom spread over the country; the number, larger than we have ever witnessed here on a similar occasion, who assembled to pay the deceased the last solemn tribute of their respect; the tears of affection and friendship shed upon his grave, are evidences strong and clear of the worth of our departed friend."

REV. HENRY M. SHAW,

That erratic political parson, who discoursed heavenly melodies from the pulpit on Sundays and martial strains from the hustings on week days, was the first pastor of the Episcopal Church at this place. He came here a young man and located, and was engaged in teaching, preaching, and to some extent in politics. He was once a State Senator from this district. He was regarded as one of the most eloquent men of his time. His welcome address to Lafayette, delivered at Louisville on behalf of a committee of citizens of this place who went there to pay their respects to that distinguished visitor in 1825, was pronounced by him as one of the finest delivered at any of his receptions. He died in Texas under a clouded reputation, and his death was in all probability the result of violence. But he had lived long enough to demonstrate that splendid abilities and morality are not always found in combination.

ABNER T. ELLIS,

A native of New England, who came to this place and began the practice law. He was small of stature, yet for many years he was the "Great Mogul" in the affairs of the borough. He was also the political "I am" in this section of the State, and made and unmade men and measures at his will and pleasure. He was Judge of the Probate Court, and was also State Senator for two terms. He possessed neither elegance of diction nor eloquence of expression; he was not a student and was superficial in legal and literary attainments, but he managed in some way to acquire a wonderful influence, amassed and controlled large sums of money, built a palatial residence, but lived long enough to survive his popularity and better days. He died in October, 1864, in embarrassed circumstances.

ROBERT N. CARNAN,

A native of the State of Maryland, who came to this place and engaged in various pursuits, dividing his time between the practice of law, merchandizing and the quest of office. He was very plausible and mingled freely with the people, and for a time became a popular favorite. He was Judge of the Probate Court, very often represented this county in the

State Legislature, and was once Speaker of the House of Representatives. He was also receiver of Public Monies. He finally placed his affections on the Circuit Judgeship, but lost the nomination for it in 1858 and his reason at the same time, and although still alive in a Western State, has since given no evidence of any social, moral or intellectual life.

WILLIAM BURTCH,

Who was born in Rutland, Vermont, December 29, 1793, and came to this place in 1814, following the course of nature in his coming and going—he came poor, embarked in commercial pursuits, obtained possession and control of a superfluity of this world's goods, directed mercantile, agricultural and manufacturing interests, controlled financial institutions, exceeded the limit of four score and ten years allotted to man on earth, and finally died very suddenly at his breakfast table in February, 1882, leaving nothing upon which administration could operate.

WILLIAM J. HEBERD,

A native of Homer, in the State of New York, who located here soon after the admission of the State into the Union and engaged in mercantile pursuits. He was attentive to business and was rewarded by a success that has been excelled by no one here. He never allowed himself to be drawn from his chosen pursuit, and was never a candidate before the people for any office. He held for a short time the position of Treasurer of the Knox Insurance Company, the only position outside of his private business he ever held. He accumulated a large fortune, both real and personal. The real estate he acquired remained with him as it were in *mortmain*, and only passed from him by the operation of the statute of descents. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church. He died almost instantaneously December 5, 1859, of heart disease, the death stroke falling upon him when he was attending to his business in his store. He left a large estate which has been preserved and increased by his children.

SAMUEL WISE,

Who was born in Hagerstown, Maryland, August 10, 1798, and came here when a young man to grow up with the country. He engaged actively in mercantile pursuits and pros-

pered in all his undertakings. In conjunction with two of his brothers, John and William J., he formed in 1835 the almost historic firm of J. S. and W. J. Wise, which occupies the singular distinction of never having been dissolved or liquidated, but went out of existence by the death of all the members. Mr. Wise was an active politician, and stood well with his party and exercised a controlling influence. He was a firm and devoted friend and admirer of Calhoun, an ardent and ultra advocate of State rights, and of a strict construction of the Federal Constitution and against its assumption of doubtful powers. He was Receiver of Public Monies under President Polk. This was the only office he ever sought or held, preferring to work in the ranks. He died almost instantaneously of apoplexy November 3, 1855.

NICHOLAS SMITH,

A native of Essex county, in the State of New Jersey, where he was born September 14, 1790. He came West and first located at Cincinnati, but soon came and located at this place, where he remained until his death. After locating here he commenced a business which he continued without interruption. He strictly attended to his own business, and never sought for gain outside of his private business pursuits. He was one of the first of our citizens to engage in produce speculations, and he carried on a heavy business in that way with New Orleans. But his financial success was due to his manufacturing business, and but little of his large fortune was made outside of that. He died August 1, 1871, leaving a reputation without a blemish, and a large estate, which has since been prudently managed by his children.

HENRY D. WHEELER,

Who was one of the original founders of the manufacturing industries of our city. He was energetic in the prosecution of his business, and was largely employed in both manufacturing and commercial pursuits. His business career was marked by many reverses incident to the hazardous and fluctuating enterprises in which he engaged, but his courage and determination never forsook him, and by his indomitable will he always rallied after a reverse of fortune, and by industry and prudence finally achieved a financial victory and accumu-

lated a handsome estate. He was one of the pillars and support of the Christian Church in this place, and did more for it perhaps than any other single individual. He was active in the support of all measures and enterprizes for the promotion of the growth and interest in the place. He was very often chosen by his fellow-citizens to assist in the management of the municipal affairs of the town as one of the Trustees. He died in the year 1866.

DAVID S. BONNER,

Who was born October 12, 1780, in Dinwiddie county, Virginia, but who came here from Baltimore, Maryland. He may be justly regarded as the founder of the manufacturing industries of our town. He was very wealthy when he came here and located, and used his means freely to advance the material interests of the place, and the very many substantial and costly structures for manufacturing, business and residence purposes erected by him, and which still remain, bear witness to his enterprise and public spirit. He began the manufacture of cotton yarn in this place many years ago, erecting for that purpose a large and costly factory, which is still numbered among the manufacturing structures of our city, and in the prosecution of this business gave employment to hundreds of both males and females. He was also at the same time extensively engaged in mercantile and agricultural pursuits. He was for many years the leading business man in this place, and was President of the Branch at this place of the State Bank of Indiana, and had a controlling influence over all financial matters. The dangers and risks incident to his business ventures finally involved him in financial ruin and the loss of all his property, and for several years prior to his death he lived in poverty and total blindness.

ANDREW GARDNER,

Who was born December 25, 1793, in Boston, Massachusetts, and came to the Wabash country in 1815, as a traveling clock peddler, but in 1816 he permanently located in Vincennes, and was among the first to engage in manufacturing. He commenced the battle for fortune with but little, but by prudence, industry and economy he gradually worked his way up, and succeeded in accumulating a handsome estate and

establishing a business which was not terminated by his death but has been continued and increased by his son, Elbridge G. Gardner. He was generally respected for his honesty and fair dealing, and was very popular with the masses and always ran ahead of his party when a candidate for the suffrages of the people. He was frequently honored with official positions of trust and profit. He was an exemplary member of the Methodist Church. He led a quiet, unassuming and Christian life, and no one who knew him failed to love and honor him. He died January 5, 1860.

JOHN CHRISTOPHER FREDERICK GRAETER,

A native of Wirtemberg, Germany, who came and located in this place prior to 1800 and engaged in the fur trade and was financially very successful. He was often chosen one of the Trustees of the old Borough, and was for many years an active Justice of the Peace. He was one of the Citizens Committee appointed to greet Gen. Lafayette in 1825. He never married but was credited with the paternity of a daughter named Mary Ann Christina, upon whom he bestowed a liberal education. She married Charles H. DeRome, a Canadian. They became involved in a serious difficulty concerning the homicide of George Hickman, and were both indicted for it by the grand jury, the husband for murder and the wife as his accomplice. The husband was tried at the April term, 1823 of the Circuit Court and was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to the State prison for one year. At the following June term the wife was tried and acquitted. Mr. Graeter died in January, 1830.

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## MUNICIPAL ORGANISM.

Vincennes enjoys the distinction of having been known and recognized by name before she was legally born. It was mentioned as a "Borough of Vincennes" before any specific act of incorporation was ever passed. The first reference to it in a legislative act occurs in the Sixth Section of the act of the Territorial Legislature locating the University in the "Borough of Vincennes," which act was passed in 1806. The first act of incorporation was passed the year following on



September 17, 1807. By this act the following persons were created its first Board of Trustees: Robert Buntin, Joshua Bond, William Bullitt, Henry Hurst, Charles Smith, Jacob Kuykendall, Hyacinth Lasselle, Touissaint Dubois and Peter Jones.

The act declared the Territory included within the following limits to be its boundary: Hart street on the North East, the Church lands on the South West, the Wabash River on the North West and Eleventh street on the South East. These continued to be the limits of the Borough until the act of the State Legislature, passed January 3d, 1817, annexed Harrison's addition to it, and the limits thus extended so remained during the entire existence of the Borough organization. The subsequent annexations to include the present limits have all been the work of the city organization.

A number of acts were afterwards passed both by the Territorial and State Legislatures amendatory and original in character; but a special reference to them would be of no interest. This Borough organization remained in operation until it was superseded by the present city regime.

An election was held on the 25th day of January, 1856, to vote on the question of adopting as the organic law the general law of the State for the incorporation of cities. This election called out a very light vote, only 255 votes being polled, of which 181 were in favor and 74 against the adoption of the general law, being an affirmative majority of 107 votes, which, however, was sufficient to adopt it as the organic law; and the old historic "Borough of Vincennes" ceased to exist and the new born "City of Vincennes" succeeded to its powers and franchises.

The last meeting of the Trustees under the Borough organization was held on the 7th day of February, 1856.

The old borough called to her service many competent and trustworthy men. The following officiated in some official capacity at different times during its existence: Jacob D. Early, George R. C. Sullivan, John Moore, Owen Reily,

General W. Johnston, Elihu Stout, John Ewing, Charles H. Tillinghast, John Collins, Valentine J. Bradley, Andrew Gardner, Samuel Hill, Martin Robinson, John C. S. Harrison, Henry D. Wheeler, Pierre LaPlante, Touissant Dubois, Abner T. Ellis and Jeremiah Donovan.

I cannot pass without a special mention of Mr. Donovan. He is as much of an official mark in Vincennes as the Harrison Mansion is a land mark. He was for a series of years Marshal under the borough organization. He never altered much in personal appearance, and was about the same at the close as he was at the commencement of his official career. At the organization of the city government he was thought to be too old to act as Marshal. But subsequently he was several times elected to that office, and discharged the duties faithfully and well. In 1863 he was a candidate for re-election, but failed to receive a majority of the votes, as his opponent, John Witchi, polled a majority over him, but was denied possession of the office on account of being of foreign birth and without evidences of naturalization, and Mr. Donovan continued to hold the office during the entire term. Mr. Donovan still lives, but is now entirely blind.

The first election for officers under the city government was held on Tuesday, February 12th, 1856. The entire vote then polled was 555.

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## JUDICIAL HISTORY.

Judicial jurisdiction within the Territory in which Vincennes is situated has been possessed and exercised by various courts. Under the Territorial Government there were two of general jurisdiction. One was the "General Court" and the other the "Common Pleas."

Upon the General Court was conferred jurisdiction in civil, criminal and chancery matters, and it exercised jurisdiction throughout the territory. Two judges presided in this Court. Henry Hurst was clerk of this Court in this county until it was superseded by the courts created by the State Constitution in 1816. It held terms as a Circuit Court in the

various counties of the Territory, which, however, were few and of extended territorial limits. Several different persons presided in this Court at different times. Henry Vanderburgh was one of its Judges from its organization until his death, which occurred on the 5th day of April 1812. He sustained the reputation of an upright and humane Judge, and his death was generally regretted. He was buried with Masonic honors on the farm east of the city now owned by Stephen Burnet. Thomas T. Davis, Waller Taylor and Benjamin Parke also presided as judges in this Court.

In a session of this Court held here on Friday, the 14th day of October, 1808, before Judges Vanderburgh and Parke, one Abraham Hiley was indicted for the murder of John Coffman. He was tried the next day by a jury, and found guilty as charged, and the death penalty affixed, and the same day he was sentenced by Judge Vanderburgh, and Saturday, the 29th of October, 1808, was fixed as the day for the execution to take place. On that day he was taken to the gallows to be hung, and standing on the drop he received a respite from the Governor until the following Tuesday, when he was pardoned, to the regret of a large concourse of people who had assembled to witness his death struggles.

In the same Court at Kaskaskia, held by Judge Vanderburgh, on the 31st of October, 1808, two capital cases were disposed of. One was that of Merenguin, an Indian, for the murder of John Russell. He was tried by a jury, found guilty and sentenced and executed on Saturday, November 19th, 1808. When asked by the court, according to common law custom, if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon him, he made the following reply:

"It is not the great spirit that is depriving me of life, but men like myself; and if a white man was in my place he would have got clear; but I am a dog and have no friends and must die."

The other case was that of Elisha Hicks, a white man, for the murder of Charles Elliott. He was also tried by a jury and found not guilty. In discharging the prisoner Judge Vanderburgh thus addressed him:

"You have been indicted for the murder of Charles

“Elliott. You pleaded not guilty. You have been tried by a jury and they have thought fit to acquit you of a most brutal and shocking murder. It would have been a source of great satisfaction to me, if in the course of your trial, I could have discovered a single circumstance that could have cast a doubt over your guilt, or in any way extenuated its enormity, but unfortunately nothing of this kind appeared. Although by this verdict your life is preserved, the guilt of having destroyed the existence of a fellow creature is fixed and established beyond a doubt.”

Without a doubt the poor Indian told the truth in his simple and affecting speech.

This court ceased to exist with the Territorial Government and its records are preserved in the archives of the State Government at Indianapolis.

The Common Pleas was a local and county Court and was concerned in settling estates of decedents and minors.

Since the organization of the State Government this jurisdiction has been possessed by different Courts. The first in the order of time was the “Court of Probate” and the following persons presided as Judges in that Court:

William Caruthers, William R. McCall, John Ewing, John B. Drennon, Henry Ruble, Mark Barnett, William L. Colman, William Polke, John Moore and Richard P. Price. This Court adjourned *Sine die*, Saturday, August 15, 1829.

It was succeeded by the “Probate Court,” which was organized September 7th, 1829.

The following persons presided as Judges in that Court: William Polke, George W. Ewing, Abner T. Ellis, Robert N. Carnan, George R. Gibson, Robert F. McConaghey, John H. Harrison, James Thorne and Clark Willis.

This Court was succeeded by the Court of Common Pleas which was organized in this county and held its first term January 3d, 1853. This Court had civil jurisdiction to a limited amount except in cases of slander and involving title to real estate. The following persons were Judges in that Court: Richard A. Clements Sr., James C. Denny, Richard A. Clements Jr., William R. Gardner and James T. Pierce.

This Court was abolished by act of the Legislature passed in 1873, and its business and jurisdiction transferred to the Circuit Courts.

The Clerks of the Circuit Court have been "*ex officio*" Clerks of all the above Courts.

The most important Court in dignity and jurisdiction has been the Circuit Court. It has always possessed general common law and equity jurisdiction both civil and criminal. It was first created by an act of the Territorial Legislature, passed at Corydon in September, 1814, and the Court was organized here and its first term began October 3d, 1814, with Isaac Blackburn as President Judge and Daniel Sullivan and James McCall as Associate Judges.

In the exercise of the highest prerogative that can be discharged by any human tribunal this Court in this county has inflicted the death penalty in only two instances in the following cases:

On the 28th September, 1822, Thomas McKinney was indicted and tried by a jury for the murder of James Boyd. John Law and General W. Johnson represented the prosecution and David Hart and Charles Dewey conducted the defense. He was found guilty as charged and the death penalty affixed. He was sentenced by the Court and publicly executed by John Decker, the Sheriff of the county, on the 15th October, 1822, near the location of the Public Cemetery. I quote extracts from the long sentence of Judge Call taken from the "*Western Sun*" of October 19th, 1822.

"It has fallen to my lot to tell a fellow being his final doom and fix the last moment beyond which the pulse of life will never beat. \* \* \* Death coming in its usual and natural shape is at all times terrible; it is so to the holy and pious worshippers of God who have no crimes to answer for. Its approaches then, when brought on by one's own wicked deeds, must be viewed with the wildest horror. \* \* \* It is ordered and adjudged by the Court that you be conveyed to the place from whence you came, there to remain until the 15th day of October inst., and then between the hours of two and three o'clock in the afternoon you be conveyed to a convenient place without the limits of this Borough, and there upon a gallows to be erected for that purpose you be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

On Thursday, the 24th day of March, 1824, William Cox, a colored man, was tried by a jury in the Circuit Court for committing a rape on Miss Smith. The jury, after a few moments consultation, returned a verdict of guilty, and he was sentenced by the Court to be hung on the 9th day of April, 1824. John Law prosecuted and Charles Dewey and Samuel Judah defended. He was publicly executed outside the limits of the borough in the angle formed by Harrison's Addition and the old borough, now included in Cochran's Addition. A rumor was current connected with this execution to the effect that the arrangements for speedily causing death being defective, and to hasten the death struggles of the victim, Seneca Almy, one of the Sheriff's assistants, jumped astride of his shoulders, and by his super-added weight hastened the same, and that for this performance he was rewarded with the succession to the Sheriffalty.

Jacob Call was the President Judge at both of the trials, and John Decker, who was Sheriff of the county for four years, during his incumbency executed both of the condemned criminals, who were the only persons that have ever been executed in this county in pursuance of legal process.

The following persons have presided as Judges of the Circuit Court:

Isaac Blackford, David Raymond, William Prince, Thos. H. Blake, General W. Johnston, Jonathan Doty, Jacob Call, John R. Porter, John Law, Amory Kinney, Elisha Huntington, William P. Bryant, John Law, Samuel B. Gookins, Delana R. Eccles, Alvin P. Hovey, William E. Niblack, Ballard Smith, Michael F. Burke, James C. Denny, John Baker and N. F. Malott.

The office of Clerk of the Circuit Court is an important one. Its records are various and voluminous, and go back as far as 1780. The limits of this county originally embraced almost the entire State, and its present dimensions have been reached by reductions from time to time as new counties were formed. Consequently papers and records affecting persons and things on the Ohio River on the south, the centre of the

State on the east, and the Vermillion river on the north, can be found among the files and records of this office. The records of the Recorder's office were destroyed by fire on the 21st of January, 1814, and the oldest record in that office at present dated only to May 26th, 1814. But no such misfortune ever befel the Clerk's office, and its records go back much farther. The first administration granted was in 1790, on the estate of James Bradford. The first marriage license issued was to Benjamin V. Beckes and Sarah Harbin, Feb. 11, 1807.

The following persons have been Clerks of the Circuit Court in the order named.

Robert Buntin, Homer Johnson, Daniel C. Johnson, Alexander D. Scott, William R. McCord, William Denny, Henry S. Cauthorn, Aquilla P. Woodall, William B. Robinson and George R. Alsop.

The Vincennes bar has always ranked high in and out of the State. It has numbered among its members such distinguished names as Moses Tabbs, Charles Dewey, David Hart, William Prince, Jacob Call, Thomas Randolph, Thomas H. Blake, Alexander Buckner, George R. C. Sullivan, John Johnson, Edward A. Hannegan, Isaac Blackford, Benjamin Parke, Samuel Judah, Benjamin M. Thomas, John Law, Abner T. Ellis, Cyrus M. Allen, and many others of ability.

The following gentlemen are now resident and practicing members of the Vincennes bar.

Frederick W. Viehe, James C. Denny, Henry S. Cauthorn, George G. Reily, William H. DeWolf, John M. Boyle, Smiley N. Chambers, Thomas R. Cobb, Orlando H. Cobb, William F. Pidgeon, William C. Johnson, William A. Cullop, George W. Shaw, Lewis C. Meyer, Benjamin M. Willoughby, William C. Niblack, Robert G. Evans, James S. Pritchett, James P. L. Weems, Samuel W. Williams, Orlan F. Baker, John Wilhelm, Charles M. Wetzell, Charles G. McCord, Edward Cooper, Frank Bloom, John T. Goodman, Mason J. Niblack, Frank Shannon, John C. Adams and John S. Long.

## Educational, Religious and Charitable Institutions.

There is no city in the State that holds out inducements to attract persons as to educational, religious and charitable institutions superior to Vincennes.

The Vincennes University has a handsome endowment fund, possesses large and magnificent buildings, second to none in the State in point of architecture, and constructed with due regard to health, comfort and convenience, and practically free to all, and offers first class advantages, equal to any college in the West.

The public schools of our city are of the highest order of merit. The school buildings already erected are large and equal in construction and ornamentation any similar structures in any city, and the schools are efficient and conducted by able and accomplished professors, and are not excelled anywhere.

The Catholics have also large and elegant buildings erected for their separate use that are equal in every respect to the public schools, in which are maintained schools for all nationalities and for both sexes, presided over by moral, accomplished and skilled professors, and which are also free to all.

The Lutheran and the Evangelical denominations are also well provided with separate school buildings and maintain schools for both sexes in all respects equal to those already named. These various school facilities are possessed by no other single city in the State, and in this respect Vincennes occupies a superior position, affording school facilities to suit all tastes and caprices.

The churches of the city are numerous and commodious, and in many cases are splendid specimens of architectural design, and represent all the leading denominations of religious belief—Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, Christian, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Evangelical, and take in all nationalities and both colors. Several of the churches in our city are genuine specimens of architectural beauty and finish



that no city in the State can equal and which contain rare works of art and interior decoration that attract and command the attention and admiration of amateurs and lovers of art.

St. Vincent's Catholic Orphan Asylum for boys is one of the largest and most commodious structures of the kind in this country, affording ample accommodation for 500 children, and as its massive and stately proportions loom up against the sky in silent grandeur its presence cheers and buoys up the heart as a perpetual reminder that the helpless ones will not be without shelter and protection should disaster come and paralyze the strong arm of their natural support. These fixed and assured evidences of a Christian and enlightened civilization are mighty magnets to attract here all those who desire these advantages and blessings, and which can all be had and enjoyed without the delay and expense of building, and in combination as they exist here are found in no other city in the State.

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## Agricultural and Mineral Resources.

No city can expect to attract and maintain a dense population without adequate resources. They must have a sure and unfailing base upon which to depend to supply the wants and the necessities of the laboring classes.

Vincennes is highly favored in this regard by location and its surroundings. Situated in one of the finest agricultural portions of the West, it has for support that great and paramount interest which is really the corner stone upon which rests all other industries and enterprises. The counties of Crawford, Richland, Jasper, Wabash and Lawrence in Illinois, and the counties of Sullivan, Greene, Daviess, Pike, Gibson and Knox in Indiana, in which it is centrally located, are by nature tributary to this city, and it should be the granary for their surplus products. These twelve counties that surround our city are not surpassed anywhere for fertility and product-

iveness of their soils. It cannot be said that all these counties are directly tributary to this city. Each of them have local points which their citizens ordinarily seek to sell their products and purchase supplies. But they frequently go beyond these ordinary avenues of trade, and when they do so then Vincennes is always the objective point.

Agriculture is yet as it were in its infancy here. For years the rich and productive prairies of Illinois were annually wasted by the overflow of the waters of the Wabash river during seasons of floods. And in our own county, vast areas, sufficient to form a good sized county, have remained unproductive and useless in consequence of the presence of stagnant surface water. But all this has been changed within the last few years, and the work of improvement is still progressing. The Wabash river, by the guardian presence of a substantial levee, is now forbidden to enter the precincts of the prairies across the river, and drainage and ditching has doubled the tillability of Knox county lands. We occupy a central position in an agricultural district that will compare favorably with any other either in or out of the State.

In mineral resources but few cities in the West are so favorably circumstanced. We are in the very heart of the coal region of the State. Sullivan and Daviess counties have abundant supplies already developed. The veins of coal in Pike county are yet in a primitive state, owing to the want of suitable facilities to throw it on the market, but in richness and quality they have no equals anywhere. There are veins of coal in that county, easy of access, from 8 to 12 feet thick, and inexhaustible in quantity, and Vincennes will eventually be the depot for that coal when it is placed on the market. Our own county is full of coal of superior quality, easy to reach and make available, and the supply abundant. These coal resources will insure cheap fuel to drive the wheels of industry and enterprise for all wants and purposes for all time.

## MANUFACTURING AND COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES.

Vincennes has every facility to become a manufacturing centre. The immense supplies of coal within easy reach at a trifling cost, and the abundant supply of timber of the best quality and of all kinds that the surrounding forests contain, furnish the raw material to accomplish the result aided by our bountiful harvest to feed the masses. With the raw material to manufacture and the fuel to insure cheap motive power to render its manufacture remunerative, and abundant supplies of breadstuffs, we only need the creative and stimulating co-operation of capital and labor to realize upon these sources of prosperity and wealth. Both are sure to come sooner or later, and the times now indicate the nearness of the approach, if they do not evidence their actual presence.

Vincennes has already secured and available avenues for trade and communication sufficient for all purposes for the speedy and safe distribution of its surplus produce and manufactured articles to any part of the world. The Wabash river will always be a natural highway and a feeder for the trade of this city. It may never be a great thoroughfare over which manufactured goods and surplus goods will pass seeking the markets of the world. But as I have said it will always be a sure and reliable artery for local traffic, and its advantages in this respect cannot be over-estimated.

But we have avenues of commerce constructed with a view of meeting and supplying actual wants and necessities that open up to our city not only all the cardinal, but other points of the compass.

The Ohio and Mississippi Railroad connects us directly with the Ohio river at Cincinnati on the East, and the Mississippi river at St. Louis on the west. The Evansville and Terre Haute Railroad connects us with the Ohio river at Evansville, on the South, and with Lake Michigan at Chicago on the north; the Indianapolis and Vincennes Railroad connects us with the State capital and the great railroad centre of the west, on the north east; and the Cairo and Vincennes Railroad connects us with the "Father of Waters" at the junction of the Ohio on the south west. These great artifi-

cial avenues of trade that have revolutionized the ordinary course of events, and by their creating and controlling influences build up and sustain cities and centres of wealth and population at places wheresoever wanted, regardless of natural advantages and facilities, are sufficient for all practical purposes, and when the time comes when our railroad system as now developed shall be supplemented by one yet to be built, and in a prudent and business like way, and subservient to our interest and under the control of the people of this city, to the coal fields of Pike county, which I trust will be in the near future, then the measure of our wants as far as commercial facilities are concerned or involved will be full to overflowing.

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### Material Progress in the Past.

The progress of Vincennes in the past has not been of mushroom growth. The path she has traced in material progress does not resemble the path of the meteor through the sky. It has been slow, steady and sure. It has not been stimulated or pressed onward by any undue or outside influences. In fact it has advanced in defiance of the neglect and unjust discrimination of legislative appropriations and enactments. Although it was the first home of civilization in the State, and the first seat of the civil power, around which rose the dawn of her brilliancy, and should have been fostered, encouraged and promoted, it has on the contrary been purposely overlooked and denied any of the stimulating aids of State care and assistance. It was attempted to despoil her by legislative interference of the Vincennes University; the lavish appropriations by the State for internal improvements were all wasted elsewhere, and the place was unjustly discriminated against in the location of the Wabash and Erie Canal. Yet it has by virtue of its own resources advanced onward, and to-day rests on a solid and sure basis. We have as fine schools, religious and public buildings as any city in the State, and a magnificent and durable stone court house, beside which there is nothing in the State to compare outside of the city of Indianapolis, and all have been built and paid for out of our own resources.

The taxable property of the city indicates a steady and healthy increase, and in 1883 amounted to \$3,784,495.00.

The influx and flow of population has also been steadily on the increase, as evidenced by the votes cast at municipal elections since the organization of the city. At the first election for officers under the city organization, February 12, 1856, only 555 votes were polled. At the last election for city officers on May 1, 1883, the vote polled was 1,679.

The post office business of any town is a faithful index of its social and business status. Our post office transactions show a steady and healthy increase. In August, 1883, a dull month in business circles, the receipts of the post office were \$100 in excess over the receipts for August, 1882. The post office here yields the Post Office Department over \$8,000 per annum.

The improvement of the material appearance of the city may be measured by the changed aspect of its surface from the topographical aspect as I have heretofore described it. The elevations have been leveled and the depressions have been filled until almost the entire territory included within the city limits has been brought to a perfect and uniform grade. The streets of our city are now justly our pride and pleasure. Although the geographical formation is gravel, it is of a species that does not remain in detached particles, but readily adheres and forms a cement and roadway as solid as adamant. When first removed from its position beneath the surface it presents a dull reddish color, but on exposure to the light and air it soon bleaches and assumes a white and shining appearance, thus giving to our streets the appearance of threads of silver winding through avenues edged with green. Within the city limits it is possible to pass in a buggy or carriage over clean, dry streets as smooth and level as a floor, and accomplish a distance equal to 40 miles without twice passing over the same ground. And when this circuit is completed, and one is tired of the view of city surroundings, the immediate suburbs around the city furnish drives over smooth and hard gravel roads, prepared by nature, meandering through "the trembling groves, the crystal running by."

And the streets of Vincennes are always dry and hard, allowing surface water to percolate through as a sieve, leaving none to stagnate and engender miasma and sow the seeds of disease and death. They afford at all seasons of the year a comfortable passage way for business or pleasure.

And the material structures of the city have assumed a new and modern aspect. The first structures here and until quite recently were of wood, and many built of logs set on end and the interstices filled with mud. A few of these old time structures still remain. One is the last house on the north west side of lower Sixth street said to date from 1792. But very few of them remain, not more than two or three in the whole city. As it appears to-day it is in fact the creation of the past few years. Although it has a history and a record reaching back to a time "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," yet it is like an old man who has doffed his old clothes and put on new ones.

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### Prospective Possibilities in Future.

We regard the prospects of Vincennes as not only encouraging but flattering. Rip Van Winkle slept for twenty years, and awoke to a new order of things. So it is with Vincennes. In former years the population here did not devote their time and talents with a view to material progress. The pleasures and amusements of the world absorbed their attention. But a new system has been evolved from the change of population and circumstances. The hard working and prudent German has come, the energetic and prolific Irishmen are here, and other races have been infused into the mass of our population, and the infusion is telling in the evidences all around of accomplished results. The sharp visaged and money making "Yankee" has been attracted hither, and the keen and discerning "Jew," who can smell *interest* as far off as the blood hound his prey, are now to be seen on our streets. In fact everything is indicative of a glorious future for Vincennes. I have never for a moment lost faith or doubted its ultimate prosperity. I founded my hopes and anticipations

upon the discriminating prescience of the Jesuit missionary fathers. When they first beheld the site of our city in the wilderness, they marked it as the future location of a city, as they did Detroit, St. Louis, Dubuque, Fort Wayne, Chicago and other centres of trade and population in the Mississippi valley. They never made a mistake in their predictions, unless it should have been in the judgment they formed of the future of Vincennes. But why should Vincennes be an exception? Everything indicates that we are on the eve of the realization of golden dreams, and that the dull and monotonous past will be swallowed up and forgotten in the brilliant achievements of the opening future.

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## CONCLUSION.

I have endeavored to give a brief sketch of some of the more important events connected with the past of Vincennes. I know the performance is imperfect, and request charity in criticising the manner of execution. It has been performed as a duty, as I fully appreciate the poetic expression of the "Wizard of the North:"

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land?"

I was born in this city over half a century ago, and have here passed my infancy, the freshness of youth and the vigor of manhood. I now survey the retrospect with pleasure, and if I could, have no desire to change the record. Although my life struggle has not resulted in a golden harvest, has in fact often been attended with periods of gloom and depression, occasioning doubts whether it were not better to turn the loved ones over to the purchased bounty of life companies, rather than risk the uncertain rewards of future employments. yet as an epitome of the whole, after slightly changing I adopt the sentiments expressed by Ruth to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave you or cease my connection with you, for your fate shall be my fate, and here will I be buried."











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